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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7905
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1345
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4870
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8433
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5995
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1703
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1850
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

Monday, 14 July 2008, 06:56

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 RANGOON 000557

SIPDIS
DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA
EO 12958 DECL: 07/13/2018
TAGS PGOV, PREL, PHUM, BM
SUBJECT: CONTINUING THE PURSUIT OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA
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Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)
1. (SBU) Embassy Rangoon pol/econ chief departs Post this week after ending a two-year tour that saw the largest political uprising in Burma i

The Senior Generals

12. (C) The Burma army remains firmly in control throughout most of the country, with Senior General Than Shwe retaining almost absolute power.
13. (C) The generals keep their power through a vast system of economic patronage, not unlike a Western style Mafia. Military-owned enterprises
14. (C) Rumors of splits at the top of the regime are the result of uninformed analysis and wishful thinking of the exiles and outside observer
15. (C) Several of our sources close to high and mid-ranking military officers tell us that some of the regional commanders are reform-minded s

Aung San Suu Kyi and the Pro-Democracy Movement

16. (C) Since the September protests, the most dynamic and talented leaders of Burma's pro-democracy movement have been jailed, left the countr
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impression of Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party as a large movement with massive support waiting to take the Parliam
17. (C) Many of the younger political activists are turning away from the NLD and preparing to run in the 2010 parliamentary elections, to effe
18. (C) The way the Uncles run the NLD indicates the party is not the last great hope for democracy and Burma. The Party is strictly hierarchic
19. (C) The "Uncles" have repeatedly rebuffed the most dynamic and creative members of the pro-democracy opposition, who reinvigorated the pro-

The Ethnic Cease-Fire Groups

10. (C) The cease-fire groups remain an important component of Burma's future political stability and it is noteworthy that none have chosen t
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11. (C) It is these long-held ethnic tensions that has kept the cease-fire groups from defecting from their dialogue with the regime to form s
12. (C) The recent statement Aung San Suu Kyi released through UN Special Envoy Gambari indicated she is aware of this problem and wants to re

Where do We Go From Here?

13. (C) Throughout the country, there is still widespread and growing frustration with the regime for its brutal and incompetent rule. Though
14. (C) Like the many community-based organizations (CBOs), religious organizations, and civil society groups that responded to Cyclone Nargis
15. (C) Ending Burma's isolation will also be integral to any successful long-term change in the country. No matter how democratic transition
16. (C) If we do decide to speak with the generals again, we should do it strategically. Dialogue could be used as a tool to bring the general
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Discussions could take place on the margins of international fora, exposing them to the outside world and its diplomatic norms, juxtaposing Bur

Give a Little, Get a Little

17. (C) While our economic sanctions give us the moral high-ground, they are largely ineffective because they are not comprehensive. Burma's k
18. (C) We should start small and hold them to real action (unlike the sham dialogue they purported to initiate with Aung San Suu Kyi last Nov
19. (C) While talking to the generals may be unpalatable, their firm control over Burma and the weakness of the pro-democracy opposition are s
20. (C) We should seek every opportunity to support and increase the capacity of Burma's nascent civil society by expanding humanitarian assis